



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

they shift with every turn of the market, or with a new invention, or with a change in the laws of the land. And it is necessary to ask whether there is any other way of determining the worth both of the things which money buys and of those things which it cannot buy.

W. R. SORLEY.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND.

POSITIVISTS AND DOCTOR COIT.

I have seldom been more surprised by any article than I was by that written by Dr. Stanton Coit in the July number of this JOURNAL, and entitled "Humanity and God." I thought that I knew something about the "English Positivists;" but as Dr. Coit has discovered such things about them that I have never heard of, I must ask him to tell us where he found this singular variety, and whom he has unearthed as addicted to the practices he describes. In all the thirty-six years that I have been associated with the Positivist movement, in the twenty-five years that I was President of the English Positivist Committee, I have never heard or seen anything at all like the ideas Dr. Coit ascribes to our body.

He begins by asserting that the English Positivists are proud of having the words "Humanity" and "God" coupled side by side. And he goes on to declare that they represent Humanity as the equal of God. I can only say that I have never known any such thing, nor has our committee or our body ever used any such language. We have always taught that Humanity and God represent ideas entirely incommensurate, incapable of being compared, having no relation or analogy whatever. Humanity is a visible, localized, limited organism, wholly *relative*, and devoid of all the divine attributes necessarily associated with the idea of God. Humanity can no more be compared with God, or grouped with God, or assimilated to God, than could the idea of one's Fatherland or the Planet we dwell on. It is an idle sneer that Positivists ever pretend to make a God of Humanity.

Dr. Coit asserts that Positivists worship Humanity, pray to it as if it were God. I can only say that I have never heard of such a thing in the twenty-five years that I presided over the body at Newton Hall and at Clifford's Inn. I myself drew up a form of exhortations which has been in constant use at all Positivist Sacraments and Celebrations. But there is not a word in these sentences which is not directly applicable to the collective human race, with all its limitations, errors, and disabilities; nor is there a word to suggest that Humanity, as a being, can have any conscious communion with men.

In my valedictory address at Newton Hall, March, 1902, I said, "no invocations answering to the litanies of theology have ever been used by us." I was there summing up the record of our body since 1881. I added that our meetings had "no character of adoration," nor did we call them "services." I went on to describe Humanity as "an ideal assemblage of human beings, living, dead, and unborn, and (presumably) *without any collective personality or consciousness.*" And Dr. Coit now tells the world that we pray to Humanity.

He says that we "worship" Humanity, whereas in this same address it is explained that the *Cult* we accepted was "the collective commemoration of all that is wise, beneficent, beautiful, and creative in the history and endowments of Man." How can a practical, relative, scientific culture such as this be taken as equivalent to the adoration of an All-knowing, Almighty Creator of the Universe? They differ as widely as an historical lecture differs from a *Te Deum*.

Dr. Coit asserts that Positivists ask men to transfer to Humanity all the homage that Christians devote to God. And he asks us, why we do not boldly declare that Humanity is God. Our answer is that we see no analogy between the two. Let me quote from my own Annual Address in Newton Hall, January 1, 1902. I said: "Nor let it be supposed that we seek to substitute Humanity for God, or Allah, or Jove, or Jehovah. The idea of an omnipotent or superhuman deity *cannot be compared with the idea of a collective human civilization*"—"our idea of Humanity is rather that of an idealized and glorified Country of the whole human race—what the image of

Rome was to the poet Virgil. The Religion of Humanity is rather a religion of *enlarged and purified Patriotism*, in which the Patriots are not of one race or land, but where the human race is the nation and our Planet is their native land."

Dr. Coit asks why Positivists use such a hymn as "Nearer, my God, to Thee." I can assure him I never heard of any Positivists who do so. We have a book of hymns which have been in constant use in Newton Hall since 1890, and then in Clifford's Inn Hall, and elsewhere. This collection of 143 pieces was made by my wife, and is now in a new edition. Sarah Adams' hymn "Nearer, my God to Thee" is not contained in it, though it is in the South Place and in the Essex Hall Hymnal. It is quite untrue that we have ever used, or adapted, or recommended this popular religious hymn. I should as soon think of giving it out at Newton Hall as Dr. Coit would think of asking his congregation on a Sunday morning to sing "Yankee Doodle."

It is also quite untrue to assert that British Positivists are in any real sense Agnostics, or indeed differ from Ethicists in the matter. In my Annual Address, January 1, 1904, I said: "We are neither Protestants, nor Catholics, nor Agnostics." We simply decline to dogmatize, or even search as to the origin of the universe, holding it outside all that concerns human life. We are by no means Agnostics," I said, "with a spiritual pride in avowing our negation of knowledge." As we know nothing we assert nothing as to the universe; and we forbear to inquire, to think, and even to deny. We have—to use Dr. Coit's own words to express his own belief—"no theory of the relation of Thought to a Being independent of Thought."

Into what Dr. Coit argues in Part II. of his paper, I will not attempt to enter. He seems to suggest that Humanity is the Moral Ideal: and that the Moral Ideal is "Very God of Very God." I cannot follow such tremendous descents into abysmal mysteries. I will only say that I cannot imagine that Humanity can be God; nor that Humanity (a real organism) can be the Moral Ideal (a spiritual concept); nor that the Moral Ideal (a human thought) can be God; nor do I even

understand what "Very God of Very God" means. All this seems to me a jumble of mysticism and theology—and humanly speaking mere clotted nonsense.

All the same I see with regret that the Moral Ideal thinks it consistent with its lofty pretensions roundly to charge brother Ethicists (as we certainly are) with duplicity and falsehood in concealing our real opinions in order to inveigle our hearers step by step. The Moral Ideal, in order to show its superiority over Humanity as well as God, dares to air its indifference to mere human ethics by accusing us of insincerity and fraud. I call the world to witness that if ever any body of men ever carried out our sacred motto—*Live without concealment*—it is the body with which I have been associated for more than a generation. There may have been in South America or in some obscure corner of these islands a body of people calling themselves Positivists who may have used hysterical language such as Dr. Coit pretends. But, if I can speak for British Positivists, I can truly say they will regard Dr. Coit's paper as a tissue of false accusations.

CLIFFORD'S INN, LONDON.

FREDERIC HARRISON.

THE ETHICS OF INTERNATIONALISM.*

It may, I think, be rightly said that the greatest thing which has happened within the last two generations has been the practical enlargement of the world for all members of civilized communities. The world, of course, is of a different size for all of us, and it is very largely determined in that size by the attitude, the conscious and the unconscious attitude which we adopt towards it. That is to say, the world is as large as we by our practical experience and our imaginative experience and sympathy choose and are able to make it. Perhaps it is age when their practicable movements and actual concrete ex-
difficult for us to realize how small a thing the world meant for most of our grandfathers and grandmothers, living in an

* An address before the Society for Ethical Culture of Philadelphia.